

## **Photography of Arachnids, A simple technique**

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To get a picture of alive arachnid is sometimes problematic, especially scorpions and sun-spiders (solpugids). Hence, I tried a simple method to prevent the scorpion from going away when I try to get its photograph, avoiding to use a glass sided terrarium, such a method which yields numerous noisy light reflections.

The new method is summarized in having two water barriers around the central place where the scorpion is temporarily staying.

As shown in (Fig. 1), the target of photography (the arachnid) will be on sand substratum filling a plastic dish (19 cm diameter x 1.5 cm height of edge) in the centre of a rounded tray (32 cm diam. x 3 cm h.) filled with water. This tray is in the centre of another larger rounded tray (60 cm diam. x 4 cm h.) also filled with water.

The arachnid must be transferred to the middle of the central dish to be in open cage and ready for photography using a flash or two with the camera. After that, the responses of different kinds of arachnids are different too. The following examples were encountered during application of this method:

### **I. Order Scorpionida (Scorpions):**

1. *Scorpio* sp. (Fig. 3a,b) quickly moved towards the edge of the dish and touched water with pedipalps to stop and to move backwards, then to run in another direction to find again the edge and to repeat the behaviour. The same behaviour had been repeated few times. Then, the scorpion learned (?) to avoid the edge and to quietly move in the median area of the dish. Even after exciting the scorpion by touching its prosoma with a forceps, it did not violently behave.

2. *Leiurus quinquestriatus* fast ran towards the edge to fall in water and continued to enter the second water barrier when I seized it with a forceps to return it to the median area where it began the escape again twice. After the third trial, it moved in the area of the dish to come near water but not to fall again.

3. *Nebo hierichonticus* quickly ran towards the edge of the dish to fall in water and to hide below the edge and to stay there undisturbed under water. After a few minutes, I had to pick it up from water. It again repeated the same behaviour. It was difficult to keep it in the suitable place for photography after it discovered that water shelter. That reminded me of a bedouin in St. Catherine, southern Sinai, who told me in 1989 that "the blue scorpion lives in water". *N. hierichonticus* is black but it has a blue tincture which appears when photographed. Also, this new technique proved to me that it likes water and that it may hide in nature in water streams or wells.

## II. Order Solpugida (Sun-spiders):

- *Galeodes* sp. (Fig. 2) very quickly ran to fall in water. It could not continue running like *L. quinquestriatus* because of its hairy covering which turned it to a ball of soaked wool. It tried again to escape after being dry but every time the water prevented it. Then, it quietly behaved to make it possible to get its photograph. It is preferred not to disturb a sun-spider during photography. This pushes it to jerk endlessly towards water.

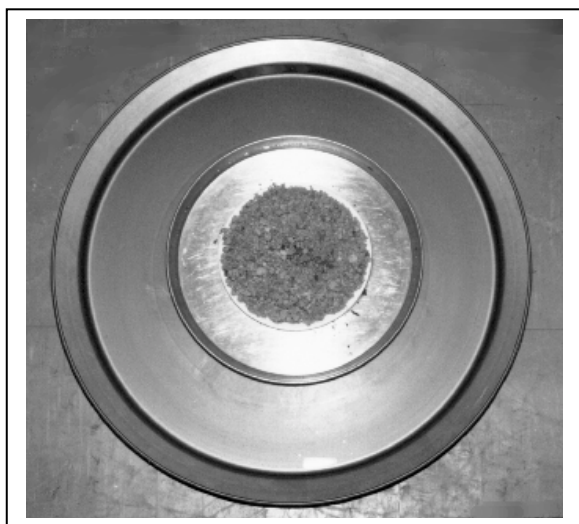


Fig. 1. Photography stage.



Fig. 2. *Galeodes* sp.

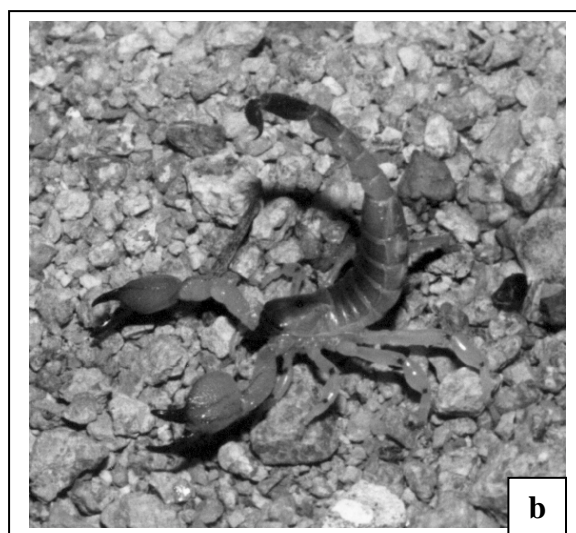
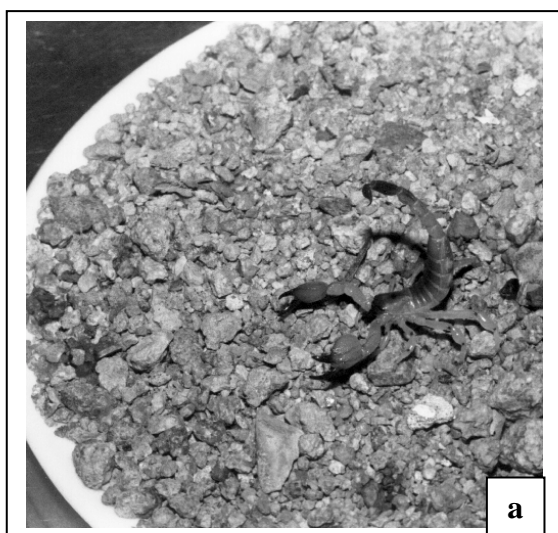


Fig. 3a,b. *Scorpio* sp. in the middle of the photography stage.

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